

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

October 10, 2019

Mr. Matthew T. Albence  
Acting Director  
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement  
500 12<sup>th</sup> St., SW  
Washington, D.C. 20536

Dear Acting Director Albence,

We write to express deep concern that the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency is building an “urban warfare” training facility modeled after neighborhoods in Chicago and Arizona.<sup>i-ii</sup> The acquisition description and the statement of work published by ICE’s Office of Acquisition Management are incredibly disturbing, especially considering ICE’s history of targeting families and instilling fear in our communities. The new military-style training center is an irresponsible use of taxpayer dollars, further betrays the public’s trust, and is one step shy of declaring war on the communities and families we represent. We strongly urge ICE to rescind its decision to award Strategic Operations, or any other entity, a contract to construct a military-style training facility.

ICE awarded an almost \$1 million contract to Strategic Operations to build a new military-style training facility at the Tactical Operations Complex (TOC) at Fort Benning, Georgia.<sup>iii</sup> Strategic Operations will build “hyper realistic” replicas of buildings from Arizona and Chicago neighborhoods so ICE agents can “experience combat conditions in a training environment that truly reflects real world conditions.” The statement of work outlines that each structure must include props found in a typical residential building, including furniture, appliances, fixtures, clothing, and toys.<sup>iv</sup> Further, your agency lists Strategic Operations’ work providing urban-simulated facilities for military training, urban warfare training services, and preparing special effects, namely, rocket-propelled grenades, mines, explosions, and combat wounds for use in military training as additional facts supporting the award. This gives the appearance that ICE, under the direction of President Donald Trump, is preparing for war in neighborhoods in Arizona, Chicago, and communities around the country.

Please provide answers to the following questions:

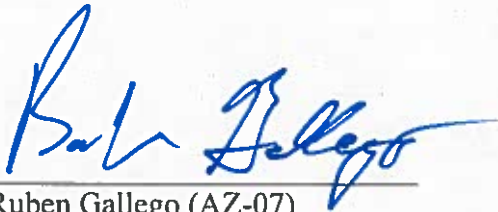
1. Please share any further rationale, evidence, or analysis ICE utilized to determine and justify the agency’s plan to build the “state-of-the-art tactical training facility.”
2. What criteria were used to identify and select Chicago and Arizona training style models?

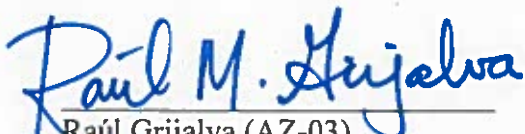
3. Does ICE intend to build additional training sites on other U.S. military bases for similar purposes? If so, will you replicate other communities or cities?
4. When is the training facility at Fort Benning expected to be completed and in full operation?


Both the acquisition description and the statement of work give our communities the impression that ICE is training for war in our neighborhoods, and we strongly urge ICE to rescind its decision to move forward with the execution of these plans. We continue to oppose the militarization of domestic law enforcement agencies and the actions of your agency to target families and hard-working people. Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

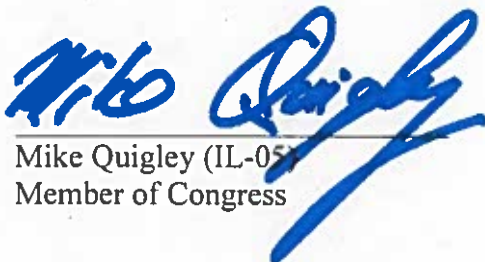
Sincerely,


  
Jesús G. "Chuy" García (IL-04)  
Member of Congress

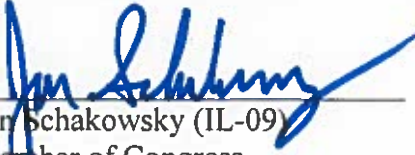
  
Ruben Gallego (AZ-07)  
Member of Congress

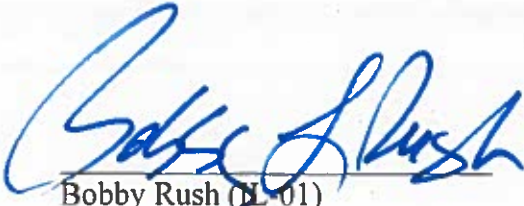
  
Raúl Grijalva (AZ-03)  
Member of Congress

  
Danny K. Davis (IL-07)  
Member of Congress

  
Mike Quigley (IL-05)  
Member of Congress

  
Bill Foster (IL-11)  
Member of Congress

  
Jan Schakowsky (IL-09)  
Member of Congress

  
Bobby Rush (IL-01)  
Member of Congress

CC: Kevin McAleenan, Acting Secretary  
Department of Homeland Security

<sup>i</sup> <https://www.newsweek.com/ice-hyper-realistic-training-facility-homes-chicago-arizona-1458721>

<sup>ii</sup> <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/breaking/ct-ice-training-simulation-chicago-name-20190914-ieudks5nyfe7towhbytco7fgey-story.html>

<sup>iii</sup> <https://www.phoenixnewtimes.com/news/ice-is-building-hyper-realistic-replicas-of-arizona-neighborhoods-11357118>

<sup>iv</sup> <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-immigration-and-customs-enforcement-training-facility-document-20190914-6xhbp76vkzg67izowmyte4osve-story.html>